

PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

#5/A
9-17-02

In re the Application of

Naomasa SHIRAISHI

Application No.: New U.S. National Stage of
PCT/JP00/04871

Filed: January 22, 2002

Docket No.: 111734

For: EXPOSURE METHOD AND APPARATUS

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
Washington, D. C. 20231

Sir:

Prior to initial examination, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 7, line 1 to page 7, line 18, delete current paragraph and insert therefor:

A1
A first exposure method according to the present invention resides in an exposure method for illuminating a first object with an exposure light beam and exposing a second object with the exposure light beam having passed through a pattern on the first object; the exposure method comprising tightly enclosing a space which includes at least a part of an optical path for the exposure light beam; and filling the tightly enclosed space with a predetermined gas through which the exposure light beam is transmitted, until a gas pressure approximate to a first gas pressure is obtained, by alternately repeating, a plurality of times, a pressure-reducing step of reducing a pressure of a gas in the tightly enclosed space until a gas pressure approximate to a second gas pressure lower than the first gas pressure is obtained; and a filling step of supplying the predetermined gas to the tightly enclosed space until an intermediate gas pressure between the first gas pressure and the second gas pressure is obtained.